

The Barnes Mystery

AN ADVENTURE OF JUDITH LEE.

By RICHARD MARSH.

Illustrated by W. R. S. Stott.



HE Barnes Mystery was the topic of the day.' It had the place of honour in all the papers. Mrs. Netherby was a widow lady who occupied, with a maid-servant, a small detached house in the Shelbourne Road, Barnes, called Oak Villa. She and the maid, whose name was Mary Freeman, were the only persons in the house. The maid was ailing. On the morning of Friday, March 22nd, the medical man in attendance, Dr. Anson, diagnosed her case as one of typhoid fever. The usual notices were at once sent to the authorities, and on the afternoon of that day she was taken away to the hospital. Her mistress, Mrs. Netherby, was left alone in the house. From the moment in which the ambulance took Mary Freeman away, no one ever again saw Mrs. Netherby alive.

On Saturday morning Dr. Anson called in the ordinary round of his practice to inquire how the old lady was getting on. The blinds were all down, the house seemed empty. He knocked and he rang, but, receiving no answer, he went away. He took it for granted that Mrs. Netherby had left the house to itself and gone to stay with her friends or relatives. Various tradesmen called in the usual way, but, no notice being taken of their presence, they departed again. So far as was known, no one else came to the house till the Tuesday following, March 26th. On the evening of that day her married daughter, Mrs. Penton, came with her husband, George Penton, to call on her mother.

The Pentons lived at Putney. They had been away for the week-end to Westcliff-on-Sea. From there Mrs. Penton had written to her mother, asking her to spend the evening with them on the following Tuesday. She

received no answer at Westcliff; on her return home on Tuesday morning she found none awaiting her. When in the evening she did not appear, she went over to Barnes with her husband to learn why it was her mother had taken no notice whatever of her letter.

It was about seven o'clock when the Pentons reached Oak Villa. When they entered the gate a light showed through the blind of the front room on the upper floor.

"Why," exclaimed Mrs. Penton, "there's only a light in mother's bedroom. Whatever is the matter?"

It was Mrs. Netherby's habit after night-fall to have a light in every room as well as in the hall. She would smilingly say that she liked lights for company. Mrs. Penton had a peculiar knock, which she used as a sort of signal to let her mother know that it was she who was there. Mr. Penton, who was standing at the foot of the steps, noticed that the moment she knocked the light in the upper room vanished.

"What's the matter with Mary?" asked Mrs. Penton. "She's generally so quick."

"The light in your mother's room has gone out," her husband said. "Perhaps she's coming down."

"She's pretty long about it." Mrs. Penton knocked again. Again there was no sign that she had been heard. She broke into nervous speech: "George, there's something wrong; I feel sure there's something wrong. Whatever can be the matter?"

They became alarmed. They went round the house to the kitchen at the back. It was in darkness; the back of the house was as dark as the front.

They were aware that Mrs. Netherby had all her windows secured with patent fasteners. It would not be easy to gain access to the house without resorting to actual violence.

"Whatever shall we do?" In the darkness and the cold Mrs. Penton drew closer to her husband's side, as if in the atmosphere of mystery which surrounded the shrouded house she felt that there was something uncanny.

"George, what's that? It sounded like—"

"George!" She clung to his arm with a grip which he all at once recognized was hysterical. He did his best to calm her; by the time he succeeded it was too late. No one knew who it was who opened and shut the front door and went out of the gate. Had Mrs. Penton permitted her husband to do as he wished—to rush off to see—the



"THE SERGEANT, MRS. PENTON, AND MR. THOMAS AND HIS SON ENTERED THE HOUSE."

He cut her short. "It sounded like someone opening and shutting the front door."

"George!" He was rushing off; she clung to his arm. "Don't leave me! George, don't leave me!"

"Then for goodness' sake come too; only be quick about it. I'm going to see who came out of the front door."

mystery might have ceased to be a mystery that very first night.

In the adjacent house there was a family of four, a Mr. and Mrs. Thomas and their grown-up son and daughter. Mr. Thomas was a solicitor. He suggested that they should send to the police-station for some person in authority, and then take his advice about breaking into the house. In due

course a sergeant appeared on the scene with two constables. In his presence a pane was taken out of the kitchen window at the back. George Penton slipped through ; then opened the back door.

The sergeant, Mrs. Penton, and Mr. Thomas and his son entered the house. The party went all over the house, lighting the gas in each room as they came to it, but found nothing. It was empty.

There was only one thing in the whole house which struck the searchers as peculiar. On the strip of carpet which ran along one side of Mrs. Netherby's bed there was a damp patch—not only damp, but actually wet, as though someone had quite recently spilt something on it. The Pentons had seen the light shining through the blind of that apartment. Someone had been in there when they knocked at the door and left that patch of wet. Who was it ?

The strip of carpet was submitted to an analyst, who reported that there was nothing unusual about the carpet at all—for instance, that there was no trace of blood.

The problem presented was—what had become of Mrs. Netherby ? She seemed to have vanished off the face of the earth. One or two facts made the problem more acute. On the Friday the maid had been taken to the hospital the old lady had been left in the house alone. On the Monday morning no fewer than twenty-three cheques bearing her signature had been presented in different quarters and cashed—not one of them at her bankers'. They had been drawn up for various amounts and changed by tradesmen with whom she had been more or less in the habit of dealing. She was a well-to-do old lady, and her credit was good in many quarters. Someone must have had an intimate knowledge of what those quarters were. In each instance the process had been the same. A woman had entered the shop, had announced that she had come from Mrs. Netherby, of Oak Villa, Barnes, had ordered goods which she paid for on the spot with a cheque which was always much larger than the bill, and had gone off with the change. In each case the woman had informed them in the shop that Mrs. Netherby had gone away for a little change, and the goods were to be sent to her at the address she gave, which was in each case a different address, but always at an hotel. It was afterwards found that the goods were at the hotels awaiting the arrival of the person to whom they had been addressed.

That was peculiarity number one. The

aggregate of the twenty-three cheques reached a considerable amount—within a few pounds of the sum which was standing to Mrs. Netherby's credit at the bank. Apparently someone, knowing how much she had there, did not wish to cause friction by over-drawing.

A third significant fact came to light. On the Monday morning, being the third day after Mary Freeman had been taken away in the ambulance, a woman called at the offices of a safe deposit company, having with her what purported to be a letter from Mrs. Netherby, in which she stated that she was in bad health and unable to leave home, and requesting them to give the bearer access to her safe. The bearer had Mrs. Netherby's own pass-key ; she gave her name as Mary Freeman. They permitted her to have access to the safe. When authority stepped in and the safe was examined, it was found to be empty ; whatever it had contained " Mary Freeman " had taken away.

Many of the Press comments were by no means relished at Scotland Yard, as was shown by a conversation which took place one evening in a room of that national centre for the suppression of crime and the discovery of criminals.

" Well, Davis, have you seen the special *Evening Screecher* ? "

Inspector Davis, to whom the question was addressed, made a sound which was scarcely suggestive of pleasure.

" I have seen the thing. It's easy enough for those newspaper fellows to talk and write. It's another thing to have to make bricks without straw."

" Which means, I suppose, that you've still no news of Mrs. Netherby, or of anything ? The ' Barnes Mystery,' as the *Screecher* puts it, is still a mystery, and likely to remain so."

" I can only tell you, Mr. Ellis, that I've done everything which, while English law remains what it is, it is possible for a man to do. Any suggestion—"

" One moment ; let me see who that is." The bell of the telephone which was on the table at which Mr. Ellis was seated was calling. He took up the receiver. " Yes ? "

A voice came to him. " What place is that ? "

" This is Scotland Yard."

" Who are you ? "

" I'm Stephen Ellis. Who's speaking ? "

The question was ignored. " Do you want to solve the Barnes Mystery ? "

Mr. Ellis returned question for question. "Who are you?"

The answer came. "If you want to solve the Barnes Mystery, be at the Regent Circus entrance to the Café Poncini in half an hour. Wear some primroses with some violets in the centre in your buttonhole. Bring two or three plain-clothes men—not with you, and don't be seen talking to them, but let them be handy. You understand?"

The voice ceased. When Mr. Ellis spoke again he received no answer, although he tried three or four times.

"I wonder," he said, as he hung up the receiver, "if someone's playing another fool's trick?" He reported to the inspector the brief conversation he had had with someone unknown. "I'm going to the Café Poncini; I'll go myself. You'd better be there too, Davis, and have two or three men within call. I dare say someone is having another joke with us; but things are getting to a point at which I'm going to throw no chances away."

Half an hour later Stephen Ellis entered the hall of the Café Poncini. The moment he did so—before he had even time to glance about him—someone came up to him. "Good evening, Mr. Ellis. You're well on time."

The speaker was a woman, scarcely more than a girl; at the first glance she struck Mr. Ellis as distinctly pretty.

"Was it you who telephoned?"

"Come inside and have some coffee. We shall be able to do all the talking that's necessary better in there." She led the way into the *café*, with its long rows of marble-topped tables.

On one side of each row of tables a long settee runs from end to end of the Café Poncini, covered in red velvet. The woman selected a lounge; at her invitation Mr. Ellis seated himself beside her.

"Order some coffee; we can take our time over drinking it."

The coffee was ordered. While it was coming Ellis eyed his companion, she submitting to his keen scrutiny with what struck him as almost laughing indifference. She was pretty, distinctly, but her most prominent characteristic was vitality.

"Who are you?" he asked, when the coffee came, "and what have you brought me here for?"

"I'm a thought-reader," she replied.

"Then, if you can read my thoughts, I wonder what you think of them?"

"I don't care about your thoughts. I look at people's faces. I not only know

what they are thinking, without hearing—I know what they are saying. Look at those two young men at the end table: the one with the moustache is telling the other about a girl who sat beside him on the seat of the omnibus on which he came from Walham Green. He is saying that she gave him her address; he is reading it from the piece of paper which he has taken from his pocket; he is saying 'Ruth Dennis, 21, Barkham Road, Parson's Green—see, that's the address she gave me. I wrote it down, so that there might be no mistake. I shouldn't be surprised if one of these days before long I looked her up—I've reported the words exactly as he uttered them; if you doubt the accuracy of my report, if you'll go and ask him you'll find that you've done me an injustice. Here's our man—the one who just came in at the door, with the clean-shaven face. He's going to sit at that empty table on the left opposite us. He's given himself into our hands; at that distance a man with a clean-shaven face can hide nothing from me."

"Is this a trick you're trying to play on me, counting on the proverbial stupidity of the police? Who is this man? And, by the way, what's your name?"

"Never mind my name. I don't know our man's name, but he is our man, as you'll find. Presently he will be joined by a companion."

Even as she spoke someone entering stood for a moment to look about him. Seeing the man alone at the table, he hastened to him. The new-comer was a short, sturdily-built young man, with a square jaw.

"Bother him!" exclaimed the woman at Mr. Ellis's side. "He's placed himself with his back to us. I sha'n't be able to tell you what he says, but I dare say we shall get enough from the other."

The new-comer had placed himself on a chair fronting the first arrival. Apparently they exchanged no greetings, but plunged at once into subdued conversation.

"You drink your coffee," said the woman to Mr. Ellis. "Don't look their way. I'll do all the watching that's needed; they won't suspect me." There was a momentary interval. "He says he's got it."

"Got what?"

"You'll see for yourself before long—he's got what will hang them."

"Let me give you a word of advice, young lady. Don't push your jest too far; what do you take me for?"

To judge from his tone Mr. Ellis was getting angry.

"If you think I'm having a jest with you, you can always go. The best thing you can do is to keep still." After an interval she asked, "Did you bring those men with you?"

"I did. You yourself are likely to find their presence awkward if you push your jest too far."

The man who had entered last had risen from his seat. Something in the woman's manner influenced Mr. Ellis in a fashion which rather surprised himself. He rose also. The woman whispered:—

"He says he's going to the Empire. We shall first have to follow him there. Wait for me outside."



"IN THE LOUNGE THEY SAW THEIR QUARRY TALKING TO A WOMAN."

"Don't be silly. Fetch one of them in here. Tell him to keep an eye on the man who came in first and, when he goes, to follow him. He's not to lose him, and he's to report to you his whereabouts. The other one is going presently; you and I will have to follow him. Send in your man—quick!"

Ellis went; something in her manner seemed to compel him. As she was settling with the waiter for the coffee, Inspector Davis came sauntering in. The square-faced man went out; the woman followed. She found Ellis without. The square-faced man was moving along Coventry Street, towards Leicester Square.

"How do you know he's going to the Empire?" asked Ellis, as he walked by the woman's side.

"I saw him say so."

"I don't know what you mean when you say you saw him say a thing when you couldn't hear a word."

"These things may be unfolded to you later. In the meantime, you see he is going to the Empire, so thus far I'm right." The man turned into the entrance of the Empire Theatre. "We'd better go in after him. I don't fancy he will stay long; he's after other game to-night."

In the lounge they saw their quarry talking to a woman. It was easy for them to stand and watch.

"He's just said to her," observed Mr. Ellis's companion, "that he's very sorry that business has turned up which it is impossible for him to neglect. Now he's going. The question is—is it easier to follow a man in a taxi or a hansom?"

"In a taxi," replied Ellis.

He was becoming interested in this young woman, almost in spite of himself. He had no doubt that she was playing a trick on him of some sort. He was beginning to wonder what was the point of it, what was her object, how far she was going. Presently the square-faced man had gone off in a taxi, closed. Had it not been closed he might have become conscious that close behind him kept another taxi, whose top was open. After they had gone some little distance the woman in the second taxi said to Mr. Ellis:—

"Is there a big hospital near?"

"There's the Surrey Hospital just ahead of us."

"Can you pick up a constable or two as we go along? They may be wanted later."

The taxi in front turned into a side street. The second driver spoke to his passengers.

"The chap in front has pulled up—had I better wait and see what's going to happen?"

It was the woman who answered.

"Wait till I give you the word." She spoke to her companion. "We may have a minute or two to wait—now's your time to pick up your constables; they may come in handy very soon. There are a couple at the corner over the road."

Getting out of the cab and going to where a couple of policemen were standing on the other side of the street, he returned with them.

The policemen, acting on Mr. Ellis's instructions, managed to squat themselves on the bottom of the vehicle, holding their

helmets in their hands. Hardly were they in their places when the driver said:—

"That chap's going off. What I know of this street, there's only one turning out of it, and that brings you back into the Southwark Road. If we go quietly on he'll come to us."

The man proved to be right. Soon a taxi came out of a turning a little way down the road, which the driver of the second cab declared to be the one they were chasing. The chase continued.

"I wonder if he's got it?" said the woman to Mr. Ellis, in tones which were only intended to reach his ears.

"Got what?"

"What will hang him?"

Mr. Ellis's tone was irascible. "If you could only manage to be a little more explicit, and not deal so much in mysteries!"

They went on perhaps the better part of another mile. Then the second taxi slowed. The driver said to them:—

"That other chap's stopping at the hospital; his passenger is getting out."

The woman said to the driver: "Take us up to the door—and stop there." Then to Mr. Ellis: "We shall have to follow him into the hospital; you must make it clear to the porter that we must see him at once, before he's had a chance of getting rid of what he's got."

They got out of the taxi at the door of a great grey building. In the hall a uniformed porter advanced to meet them. Mr. Ellis addressed him in tones of authority.

"I want you to take me immediately to the gentleman who has just come in."

The porter hesitated. "What's your name and business? He may be engaged and not wish to be disturbed."

"I'm an officer of police from Scotland Yard. Your business is to take me to him at once without an instant's delay."

Still the porter dallied. "I believe he's gone to the dissecting-room."

"Where is the dissecting-room? Take us there at once."

The porter led the way and the others followed; the woman and Mr. Ellis in front, the two policemen behind. The porter paused outside a door.

"This is the dissecting-room."

"Stop!" said the woman. Then, to Mr. Ellis: "Let the two policemen stay outside until you call them in. Now open the door."

The porter did as he was bid. Ellis and the woman went into the room. Only one person was in the room, the man they had

been following. He was standing by one of the tables, busy with something which he had taken out of a small, square parcel.

" Halloa ! " he exclaimed, as he heard the door open behind him. " Who's that ? "

The woman strode forward, Ellis at her side.

" You see ! " she exclaimed, pointing to the ghastly object which the man was holding as

like another man—like one who was suddenly afraid. Words came from him.

" Who told you—Anson ? "

" Anson ! That's the name I couldn't catch," the woman cried. " What an idiot I am ! I might have guessed—that's the name of the man who was in attendance on her at Barnes. Take this man, and then off for Dr. Anson—quick ! He's the man you're



" 'WHAT NONSENSE IS THIS ? ' CRIED DR. LINTOTT."

nonchalantly as if it were some unconsidered trifle.

" Who the deuce are you ? " he demanded. He turned to the porter. " Simpson, what do you mean by letting these people in here ? "

" That," said the woman, " is Mrs. Netherby's head. I rather fancy it is all that is left of her."

The man stared at the woman. Something seemed to pass from her eyes to his. He changed countenance, looking all at once

wanting most. This gentleman will hardly deny that what he's holding is the head of the late Mrs. Netherby, of Barnes."

" What's your name ? " asked Ellis.

" I'm Dr. Lintott. I'm one of the house-surgeons. What's the meaning of this intrusion ? Who are you, sir ? "

" I'm an officer of police, and I arrest you for being concerned in the murder of Mrs. Netherby, of Barnes." He called the two policemen into the room. " Take your prisoner."

"What nonsense is this?" cried Dr. Lintott.

"You need not answer my question; you need say nothing. You heard what this lady said. Is that Mrs. Netherby's head which you have in your hand?"

"How am I to know whose head it is? It's a subject which I brought here for dissection in the ordinary course. I'm going to give a demonstration on it to-morrow."

"I tell you it is the head of the late Mrs. Netherby, to his knowledge, and for that statement I accept full responsibility. Don't chop phrases with him—something tells me that if we are not quick we shall be too late for Dr. Anson."

In spite of his protests Dr. Lintott was handcuffed, and was presently borne off, a prisoner, in the same taxi-cab which had brought him, with the two policemen as companions. That dreadful human relic went with them in the cab.

Mr. Ellis dashed across London, the woman at his side, in the second taxi. It is a long way from the Surrey Hospital to Barnes. Mr. Ellis plied his companion with questions to which he received no answers.

"What you have to do," she told him, "is to solve the Barnes Mystery. Before you go to sleep to-night you'll have done it. My part in the business doesn't matter. I'll give you all the explanations you're entitled to—when we have finished. Something tells me, as if it were something in my bones, that the chief criminal is slipping away from us, even while we're rushing to him."

The cab stopped. Someone who was standing on the pavement came towards them. Ellis spoke:—

"Who's this? Why, Davis, is that you?"

"The man you told me to shadow was Dr. Anson."

"You traced Dr. Anson home?" asked the woman.

"I did. He came by train to Barnes Station, then walked."

"Do you think he knew that he was being followed?"

"I think he may have had his doubts. He stopped twice and looked round."

"And saw you?"

"That I cannot say."

"But you think it possible?" The inspector was silent. "I see; that explains my premonition."

Leaving the taxi where it was, the three approached the house on foot. The in-

spector remained at the gate, while the others went to the front door, which was almost instantly opened by a trim maid.

"Can I see Dr. Anson?" asked Ellis. The maid invited them in; she said she would see. "Where is he?" She pointed to a door at the other end of the little hall. "I will announce myself." Mr. Ellis moved to the door to which she had pointed. He turned the handle. "This door is locked." He tapped at the panel; no answer. Again, very loudly; no reply. He thumped it with the palm of his open hand. "Inside there! Dr. Anson!" Still silence. He turned to the maid. "You are sure Dr. Anson is in this room?"

"Dr. Anson went in there; I saw him go. I haven't heard him come out."

"You'll have to force the door," said the woman.

Ellis struck it a violent blow with his shoulder. It showed no signs of yielding. He went to the hall door and called out.

"Davis!" The inspector came across the garden. "The servant says Dr. Anson is in his study. The door is locked, and I can't get him to pay any attention to my knocking—I'm going to force it open."

"Let me see the door," said Davis. "There are very few rooms in modern houses which I can't open."

He was a big, heavy man, nearly six feet high. He wrapped a great handkerchief round his knuckles, then drove his right fist with all his might against the panel of the door. It went through it as if the panel had been made of paper. He glanced through the aperture which he had made.

"He's in there, on a chair at the table; but there's something wrong."

He enlarged the aperture by striking the panel a second time; then, putting his arm through, got down to the key, which was in the lock, turned it, and the door was open. They all went in; then they saw that, as Davis had said, there was something wrong. Dr. Anson was leaning back in his elbow-chair in a quite natural attitude, but he was dead. The inspector touched his skin.

"He is quite warm; he can only have been dead a few minutes."

Ellis stooped to the dead man's mouth.

"It's cyanide; he probably took it when he heard me knocking. Death was no doubt instantaneous."

"As I said, he knew that he was followed, and he understood. He probably recognized your knock as the knell of doom. I think that my presence is no longer needed."

This was the woman. She turned as if to go. Davis interposed.

"Excuse me, but your presence is needed more than ever. There's a great deal that will have to be explained."

"That is easily done—probably in less than five minutes."

She looked at Ellis. Even in the grim presence of Death one could see that there was a twinkle in her eyes.

"I'm a teacher of the deaf and dumb—that is the explanation."

Ellis looked puzzled. "But, pardon me, I don't see that that explains anything."

"On the contrary, it explains everything. I teach lip reading; that is, I teach deaf and dumb people to speak and to understand other people speak by observing, and imitating, the motions which the lips make in pronouncing words. I'm an expert teacher. My father and mother are teachers. Wherever I am I have only to look about me at people's faces, and if they are talking I can tell you what they are saying."

"Is that really a fact?"

"I've given you one very good proof to-night. Last night I was in the Café Poncini. Two men were seated in front of me—one was this man, the other was Dr. Lintott. It was rather late. I fancy Dr. Lintott had been dining pretty well. It was the fact that he seemed to have drunk quite enough which caused me first of all to notice him. They had evidently both of them something to do with medicine, probably doctors. They were talking about subjects for dissection—the difficulty of obtaining them. Suddenly Dr. Lintott said something which struck me: 'I suppose we've nearly finished with your old woman of Barnes?' The other man said nothing. Dr. Lintott went on, ticking his words off on his fingers. 'She's been an educational force to all the hospitals in London. The way in which, without rousing the slightest suspicion, I've helped you to be rid of Mrs.——' The other man cut him short. 'I wish you wouldn't talk like that,' I saw him say. 'I won't,' said Dr. Lintott; 'but as an educational force you certainly must allow me to drink to Mrs. N. I saw him say 'Mrs. N.' most distinctly. I almost jumped as he said it. He had already spoken of the 'old woman of Barnes,' and I at once thought of Mrs. Netherby; there was an evening paper in front of me, in which the chief topic was the Barnes Mystery."

"How far," asked Ellis, "were these two men from you?"

"They were two tables farther down on the other side. I had a perfect view of their faces."

"It's a very uncanny power which you seem to have."

"It's not uncanny at all. But to continue about last night. I saw Dr. Lintott say, 'Now, tell me, have you got rid of the whole of her?' The other man hesitated. Then he said, 'There remains the head.' They whispered together for some moments. At last Lintott got up. I could see him say, 'Then to-morrow night, some convenient place?' 'Quite—where you can get it on your road back.' Then Lintott went away; then the other went; and last of all I went."

The woman held out her hands with a little, quaint gesture.

"The more I thought of it, the more convinced I became that the 'old woman of Barnes,' 'Mrs. N.', was Mrs. Netherby, of Oak Villa, and that I held in my hand the key of what all the world was beginning to regard as an insoluble puzzle. That these two men were criminals, to my mind, was clear; but how was I to make it clear to the official mind? I hesitated, and at the last moment I telephoned. You are now in a position, I think, in which the Barnes Mystery is likely to continue a mystery no longer."

"There's one detail you have still omitted—your name."

"My name is Judith Lee."

"Still one moment." Mr. Ellis checked her as again she turned to go. "There seems to be something here which you may find of interest."

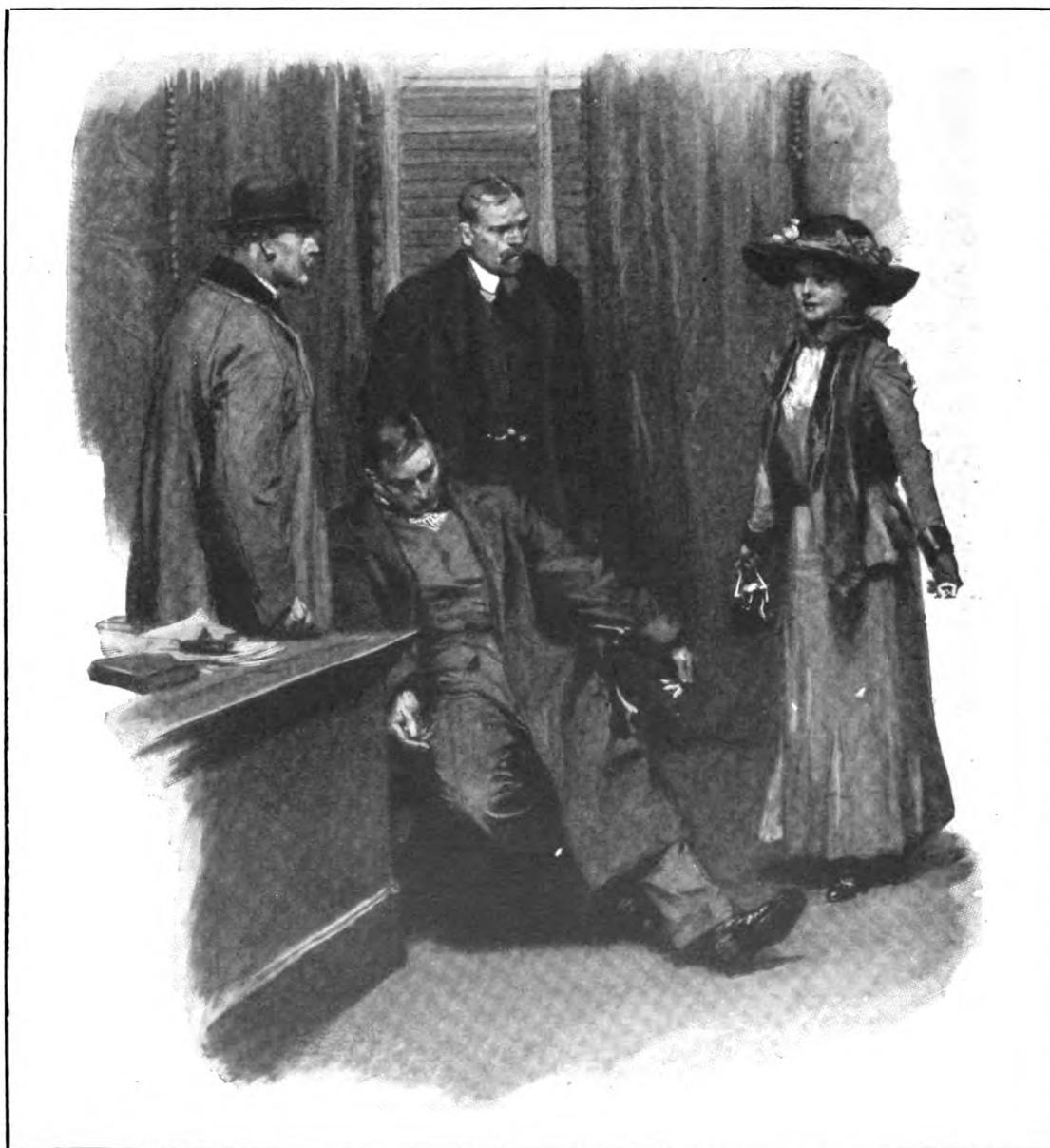
The dead man sat at his writing-table. In front of him was a large blotting-pad. On it were sheets of paper closely covered with writing. Over these was a half-sheet on which were a few lines. Mr. Ellis read aloud from the half-sheet:

"'Three men got into my train at Waterloo. I had my suspicions directly I saw them. They got out with me at Barnes; they were the only persons who did. They did their best to conceal the fact, but I was aware that they followed me from the station home. I feel that in the pocket of each one is a pair of handcuffs. I understand. Every second I expect a knocking at the front door; when it comes, I go. I shall have gone before they get from the front door to this room. The MS. on which I am going to lay this half-sheet of paper contains notes which may save a certain amount of trouble.' He must

have written that, Davis, while you were waiting for me in the road outside." Mr. Ellis took up the sheets of paper, which were covered with writing. "I presume these are the notes to which he refers."

They were. They are at present in the

ready cash. A friend named Lintott, who was one of the house-surgeons at the Surrey Hospital, was in similar straits. They were boon companions; birds of a feather. One evening they had been discussing their common necessities. Lintott asked Anson if



"I'M A TEACHER OF THE DEAF AND DUMB—THAT IS THE EXPLANATION."

archives of Scotland Yard, forming as singular a document as is to be found in the annals of criminal literature.

From these notes it appeared that Dr. Anson, whose expenses far exceeded his professional income, was hard pressed for

he had no patient of whom he could dispose, and by whose disposal they could replenish their exhausted coffers. The question was jokingly asked. Anson took it in earnest. His thoughts flew to Mrs. Netherby. She seemed to be very much alone in the world,

and to be possessed of sufficient means. He might get a clearer idea of her exact pecuniary position in the course of a day or two.

According to Anson's own statement, the two men talked Mrs. Netherby over together as if she had been a lay figure who might turn out to be worth to them a considerable sum of money. It would be easy to kill her; the difficulty would be in the disposal of the remains. Lintott said that there need be no difficulty about that. If a reasonable amount of time might be reckoned on, she could be dismembered at her own house, and the different parts of her body could be distributed among the various London hospitals for the purposes of dissection.

On Friday, March 22nd, it became clear that the servant-girl had typhoid. Anson communicated with the authorities, and on the Friday afternoon she was taken away. He was present in the house at the time, remaining after she had been removed. He stated in his confession that it was only after she had been removed and he was left alone in the house with the old lady that it occurred to him what a magnificent opportunity it would be to put into practice what he and Lintott had talked about a few evenings before. He declared that the temptation came to him in a form which he found it impossible to resist. Ten minutes after the maid had been taken away her mistress was dead; he had killed her. He then overhauled her papers, to find that she had a satisfactory balance at her bank, and documents of considerable value in the vault of a safe deposit company. He put the body of the old lady under a bed which was shrouded by a valance which reached the floor, put her papers in his pocket, and went his round. The next morning he called, and, in the presence of his coachman, he knocked and rang, without any notice being taken. He said to his coachman that he supposed the old lady had left the house and gone to stay with friends.

He telegraphed to Lintott, who that night came to see him. He told him what he had done. When Lintott heard what a large sum she had left at her bank he seems to have acquiesced without remonstrance.

Dr. Lintott was an amateur actor. He had acted female parts in musical comedies with striking success. According to Anson he made almost a perfect girl. He was also an expert penman. He forged cheques for the lady's entire balance and, garbed as a woman, presented them at her various tradesmen's shops without suspicion having been once aroused. In another feminine disguise, with a forged order, he went to the old lady's safe in the vault of the deposit company and cleared it out. The securities, however, were of a kind which it would be dangerous to negotiate.

The old lady was dismembered by Dr. Anson at night in the empty house, and the various parts were handed to Lintott, who distributed them among medical students of his acquaintance. On the Tuesday evening on which Mrs. Penton called to see her mother Anson had gone to Oak Villa to perform a double task: to remove all that was left of his victim—the head—and to get rid of a tell-tale stain which, in spite of all his precautions, was on the carpet by the old lady's bed. His sensations when he heard the knocking at the door are graphically described. He instantly put out the light, and with the head in a cardboard box in his hand he hastened downstairs. When the would-be visitors went to the back of the house, he opened the front door and slipped out.

Whether, in all their details, the statements in Anson's MS. were perfectly correct has never been ascertained. Lintott was as prepared for emergencies as his accomplice. In spite of his handcuffs, on the road to the police-station he managed to reach his mouth. All at once the two policemen found that they had with them in the taxi-cab a corpse. He had left behind him no papers of any kind which threw light upon the story which Anson had told, but among his belongings was a large quantity of feminine wearing apparel. One of the dresses was recognized by some of the tradesmen who had cashed the cheques as having been worn by the woman who presented them. Officials at the safe deposit company had no doubt that a second had been worn by the woman who came in Mrs. Netherby's name.